

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT:	T. Nomura et al.	CONF. NO.:	2625
U.S. SERIAL NO.:	10/530,122	EXAMINER:	M. Rahman
FILED:	February 23, 2010	GROUP:	2438
FOR:	IMAGE PROCESSING DEVICE AND IMAGE PROCESSING SYSTEM		

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
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Sir:

AMENDMENT

Applicants are in receipt of the Office Action dated November 22, 2010 and the Advisory Action dated March 7, 2011 of the above-referenced application. A Request for Continued Examination (RCE) and a two-month extension of time are submitted herewith. Please amend the application as follows:

Amendments to the claims are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 2 of this paper.

Remarks begin on page 5 of this paper.

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): An image processing device, comprising:

a plurality of image data processing means including at least first and second image data processing means which have different security levels and which process inputted image data;
and

one or more image data processing requesting means which request any of the image data processing means to process image data,

wherein the image data processing requesting means specify in advance automatic selection or manual selection of the image data processing means, and

the image data processing requesting means have a function to verify security levels of the second image data processing means to which the image data processing is to be requested and then request the second image data processing means to perform distributed processing of image data in addition to the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The image processing device according to claim 1, wherein the image data processing requesting means have a function to select, from among the plurality of image data processing means, all other image data processing means whose security level is equal to or higher than the security level of the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data, and a function to request the selected second image data processing means to perform distributed processing of the image data.

Claim 3 (currently amended): An image processing device, comprising:

a plurality of image data processing means including at least first and second image data processing means which have different security levels and which process inputted image data; and

~~an~~ image data processing requesting means which request any of the image data processing means to process image data,

wherein the image data processing requesting means specify in advance automatic selection or manual selection of the image data processing means, and

the image data processing requesting means have a function to verify a security level of the second image data processing means to which the image data processing is to be requested and then request the second image data processing means to perform alternate processing of the image data in place of the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data if the first image data processing means can no longer continue processing subsequent part of the image data.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The image processing device according to claim 3, wherein the image data processing requesting means have a function to select, from among the plurality of image data processing means, all other image data processing means whose security level is equal to or higher than the security level of the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data, and a function to request the selected second image data processing means to perform alternate processing of subsequent part of the image data.

Claim 5 (currently amended): An image processing system, comprising:

a plurality of image data processing means including at least first and second image data processing means which have different security levels and which process inputted image data; and

~~an~~ image data processing requesting means which request any of the image data processing means to process image data, where the image processing system distributes image data received from the image data processing requesting means to the second image data processing means available for distributed processing in addition to the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data, wherein

the data processing requesting means specify in advance automatic selection or manual selection of the image data processing means, and the image data processing requesting means have a function to verify security levels of the second image data processing means to which the image data distributed processing is to be requested and then request the second image data processing means to perform distributed processing of the image data; and

the second image data processing means have a function to perform distributed processing of the image data in conjunction with the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data.

Claim 6 (currently amended): An image processing system, comprising:

a plurality of image data processing means including at least first and second image data processing means which have different security levels and which process inputted image data; and

image data processing requesting means which request any of the image data processing means to process image data, where the image processing system alternated processes image data inputted by the image data processing requesting means to the second image data processing means available for alternate processing in place of the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data,

wherein the image data processing requesting means specify in advance automatic selection or manual selection of the image data processing means, and the image data processing requesting means have a function to verify a security level of the second image data processing means to which the image data alternate processing is to be requested and then request the second image data processing means to perform alternate processing of the inputted image data if the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data can no longer continue processing subsequent part of the image data; and

the second image data processing means has a function to perform alternate processing of the subsequent part of the image data in place of the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data.

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. Independent claims 1, 3, 5, and 6 have been amended to recite that "the image data processing requesting means specify in advance automatic selection or manual selection of the image data processing means." The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed (see, e.g., published application at paragraphs 0066-0070 and 0077-0081; and steps S104 and S114 of FIGS. 6-7, respectively).

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2003/0115326 to Verma et al. ("Verma") in view of U.S. Patent 7,110,541 to Lunt et al. ("Lunt"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding the rejection of independent claims 1, 3, 5, and 6 over the proposed combination of Verma in view of Lunt, the proposed combination does not teach or suggest a plurality of image data processing means (including first and second image data processing means) and image data processing requesting means that "specify in advance automatic selection or manual selection of the image data processing means," where the image data processing requesting means verify a security level of the second image data processing means, and then request the second image data processing means to perform "distributed processing of image data in addition to the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data," as claimed.

There is simply no teaching or suggestion in the proposed combination of Verma in view of Lunt that it is possible to "specify in advance automatic selection or manual selection of the image data processing means," where the image data processing means perform distributed processing.

Additionally, as discussed in the Response to Office Action filed on February 18, 2011, there is no teaching or suggestion in the proposed combination of Verma in view of Lunt of image data processing means that have "different security levels," as claimed.

For example, it is described in paragraphs 0152 and 0169 of Verma that users may have access rights that enable them to have access to DMM objects, **not that the peripherals themselves have "different security levels," as claimed** (emphasis added).

One of ordinary skill in the art would understand that the assignment of different access rights to users does not imply that the peripherals would have their own security levels.

In fact, as described in paragraphs 0152 and 0169 of Verma, access rights to DMM objects are managed independently of the peripherals themselves.

Additionally, paragraph 0089 of Verma describes that a thin client 224 communicates with a remote DMM 232 of a second appliance 234; and paragraph 0277 of Verma describes how a DDM 206 monitors a queue 7906, and can pass data to an appropriate destination. However, these sections of Verma do not teach or suggest that the peripherals themselves have "different security levels," as claimed.

Further, there is no teaching or suggestion in Verma of checking security levels of a "second" image data processing means in order to request that the second image data processing means perform distributed processing.

On page 7, first paragraph of the Office Action of 11/22/2010, it was admitted that the Verma reference does not teach or suggest "verifying security levels" of a second image data processing means, but column 4, lines 30-38 of Lunt was cited allegedly to remedy this deficiency.

In the "Continuation Sheet" to the Advisory Action dated March 7, 2011, the Lunt reference was cited allegedly for disclosing peripherals with "different security levels" and for performing distributed processing.

In Lunt, "trusted" printers 131-135 are available only to authorized users of the network (see column 2, lines 47-52 of Lunt). Referring to column 4, lines 8-15 of Lunt, it is described that each print job has a "specified protection level," not that the printers themselves have different security levels. Further, in column 7, lines 10-17 of Lunt, it is merely described that a trusted printer can be used to print a print job with forgery protection; there is no teaching or suggestion that the print job is somehow printed on multiple printers (i.e., distributed processing).

Even if Lunt is somehow combined with Verma, the proposed combination still would not teach or suggest that first and second image data processing means have different security levels, and where an image data processing requesting means specifies "in advance automatic selection or manual selection of the image data processing means," and verifies a security level of the second image data processing means so that distributed processing can be performed by the second image data processing means, as claimed.

For at least the reasons discussed above, the proposed combination of Verma in view of Lunt does not teach or suggest the Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, independent claims 1, 3, 5, and 6 and dependent claims 2 and 4 are patentable over the proposed combination.

It is believed that the claims are in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: April 21, 2011

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